DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 309 309 CE 052 965

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TITLE The Promotion of Cooperation amongst Research and Development Organizations in the Field of Vocational Training. CEDEFOP Flash 6/89.
INSTITUTION European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin (West Germany).
PUB DATE Jul 89
NOTE 15p.; Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Research Forum of the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) (5th, Berlin, West Germany, July 3-5, 1989).
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Dislocated Workers; *Education Work Relationship; Foreign Countries; Research and Development; *Technological Advancement; Trainers; *Training; *Transitional Programs; Unemployment; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Europe (West)

ABSTRACT

This document describes the fifth meeting of Europe's Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) annual research forum, where the main topics of discussion included the transition from school to employment (a main focus for all the organizations represented), training for the long-term unemployed, training for new technology, use of new technology in training, training of trainers, evaluation methods, important research and development projects not in the CEDEFOP list, and future research and development priorities. The document's information is contained in six numbered headings (and three subheadings) that roughly correspond to those topics. Information on the administrative structure of a new Task Force on Human Resources and CEDEFOP's first training and qualification scenario meeting is also presented. (CML)

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In addition to the participants attending the Annual Research Forum a number of other experts were invited to join in the scenario presentations and discussions at which Ms. Papandreou, Member of the Commission responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Education, was represented by Mr. M. Trifyllis, Chef de Cabinet to Ms. Papandreou and by Mr. A. Kirchberger who gave a keynote speech on the subject of the social dimension of the internal market on the morning of 4 July. Further details on the two meetings are given under separate headings in this report.

2. CEDEFOP Annual Research Forum

The fifth CEDEFOP Annual Research Forum for organizations involved in vocational training and development in the Member States took place in Berlin on 3 July this year. Dr. Piehl, Director of CEDEFOP, opening the fifth Forum for research and development organizations, welcomed the participants and gave a short introductory speech in which he emphasized the importance of the research forum and the exchange of the national research summary reports. He continued and said that the emphasis in the reports and at the meeting should be on research activities of a new or innovative nature and should not be concerned with details on past work or the setting up of new training centres and training programmes.

Dr. Piehl extended a special welcome to Mr. Koelink, Vice-President of the CEDEFOP Management Board, Mr. C. d'Azevedo of the new Commission Task Force on Human Resources, Education, Training & Youth which has responsibility for vocational training among other things and to Prof. M. Makhmutov and Ms. O. Oleynikova of the Academy of Pedagogical Science of the USSR, Moscow. This was the first time that CEDEFOP had been able to welcome representatives from the Soviet Union.

Explaining the funtion of the meeting, Dr. Piehl said that the main objective was to provide a forum for the directors and senior staff of the national research institutions and to encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

3. Information on current work of CEDEFOP, the Commission and at national level.

3.1 E. Retuerto, Deputy Director of CEDEFOP, then gave a short presentation on the Work Programme, saying that the scenario exercise was rather apart from the normal Work Prorgramme. As was to be expected, evaluation of the reports has been difficult due to the great diversity of aims and methodologies, but it was essential to offer a platform for discussion on the subject, and CEDEFOP also had an interest in perspective studies in relation to its own four-year perspective.

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Continuing his presentation, he said that the first concern of the Work Programme was with the evolution of training needs and qualification demands, the progress of work on correspondance of qualifications with a view to aiding the free movement of workers within the Community. Another area of emphasis is on the development of work on occupational profiles, which is closely linked with the question of the correspondance of qualifications. Linked to this work is the consideration being given to the introduction of a European training passport which would list appropriate details of a person's training and qualifications so that employers in other countries would have a reliable means of evaluating a candidate's suitability for employment in his field of specialization.

3.2 Commission

Mr. C. d'Azevedo, a section head in the Commission's new Task Force on Human Resources then gave a presentation on the Task Force and its range of functions.

He said that the administrative structure had just become known during the previous week and that it would include the following five units:

1. educational cooperation, ERASMUS and youth activities, including relations with the youth forum
2. COMETT programme, university-industry cooperation in advanced training
3. Education and training for technological change
4. Initial and continuing training, and vocational qualifications
5. Strategic planning, evaluation and links with other Community policies.

So far as immediate objectives are concerned, these relate to the free movement of labour, initial and continuing training, the development of the ERASMUS programme concerning exchanges of students in universities and other institutes of higher education, and youth exchanges. The role of the Task Force would be complementary to that of the Member States, respecting the diversity of their education systems and traditions. He also emphasized the importance of the involvement of the social partners in these developments.

J. Horgan, European Centre for Work and Society, gave a short report on the EuroTecnet programme, which the European Centre for Work and Society carries out on behalf of the Commission.

He said that the EuroTecnet programme was unique in that it was the only Commission action programme for training of blue collar workers in new technologies and it was also unique in that the

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programmes carried out in the Member States are not funded directly by the Commission.

EuroTecnet stands for European technology network, the aim of which is to promote the training for new technologies, particularly in small and medium enterprises, to promote the training of young people in transition from school to employment to work with new technologies, and to provide the similar opportunities for women. The programme is also designed to assist in the raising of the general awareness level of the population with regard to the introduction and use of new technologies.

3.3 Main current research activities at national level

Transition from school to employment continues to be a major work focus for all the organizations represented at the meeting and, in view of downward demographic trends in most Member States, the importance of preparing young people for transition from school to employment in such a way that they will have every opportunity to develop their full potential is being ever more widely recognized.

Follow-up studies covering the transition from school to work continue to be a feature in many of the work programmes presented at the meeting and some of these projects not only examine the progress made by those who have already successfully completed vocational training and acquired a few years of practical experience, but also examine attitudes to training and employment and particularly, interviewees' attitudes to the transition from school to employment process they have experienced. In France, for example, one method of following up young people involves a telephone survey amongst a selected panel of young people who have completed secondary education, and it is intended to apply this method to a group of young people who are holders of the new vocational baccalaureat certificate. Projects for the training and retraining of long-term unemployed adults and people in employment threatened with redundancy, continue to develop in significance in most of the Member States, in particular in the context of demographic changes.

Whilst the pace and spread of the new technologies continues to be uneven, increasing emphasis is being placed on training people in basic skills which can provide a platform for further training to deal with current and future technological changes.

The common themes appearing in the reports can be summarized as follows:

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- the training of young people for transition from school to employment, with increasing emphasis on follow-up cohort studies
- the development of evaluation techniques for training programmes
- adult training and retraining measures including the development of financial support schemes during training periods
- training programmes for new technologies
- the use of new technologies in teaching and learning, including evaluation methods
- the training of trainers
- labour market and vocational training supply studies
- the training of management, especially in small and medium enterprises.

A research project being carried out by the BIBB is looking at quality assurance and improvement in in-company initial vocational training to evaluate the standard practices in initial vocational training in the Federal Republic of Germany, on the basis of a representative survey (10 000 companies providing training). The objective of this project is to analyze the structuring of in-company initial training in order to obtain indicators for safeguarding and improving its quality.

For the first time at a research forum meeting the participants heard a presentation on tendencies and perspectives in vocational education in the USSR by Professor M. Makhmutov, USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, Moscow. Giving some idea of figures concerned in the education and training of the population, he said that there were about 60 million students and that amongst the working population there were at least 34 million engineers and technicians.

He went on to say that the major part of the labour force is provided by the system of vocational education, which turns out about 2.5 million qualified workers per annum. The majority of unskilled manpower and a part of the skilled labour force receive their training directly at an industrial or an agricultural plant. The bulk of the highly-skilled workers receive training directly at the works, being selected from the most capable workers who arrive with a recognized qualification.

Vocational training is financed from two sources: running costs, equipment and rural construction, meals and outfit of the students, wages of teaching staff are items of the State budget and municipal construction expenses are met by the means of industrial enterprises. It is normal practice that vocational schools are under the patronage of the factories in the district providing them with the necessary equipment and personnel.

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A new development is the idea of setting up combined educational institutions offering courses from two to four years for different groups of students. Such vocational schools will provide a connecting link between general education, technical training, elementary and higher technical education and subsequently the teaching of adults.

In closing, Professor Makhmutov said that the system of vocational education in the USSR has covered stages of development, beginning with the simplest decentralized training for unskilled workers in the workshops to the excessive centralization within the state government system of vocational education, and then back again to decentralization, but under completely new conditions, from very short-term training to long-term training lasting from three to four years, and from narrow specialization to polyvalent training in a wide range of subjects.

The trend towards more forward-oriented studies continues and this has provided the impetus for the CEDEFOP pilot project on training and qualification scenarios to the years 1992 and 2000 which formed the main subject for presentations and discussions at the meeting on 4 and 5 July. Fuller details of the scenario meeting are given below in this report.

3.4 Research and development projects not shown on the CEDEFOP list

1. One on-going project not shown on the CEDEFOP list of subjects concerns a study on continuing training for master craftsmen in industry which is exploring the effects of technological innovations on the lower management level in manufacturing. Interviews are being used to obtain information on the role of craftsmen in industry as a functional strata in selected firms in the machine tool, automobile and chemical industries. The case studies are being supplemented by up-to-date findings from a representative survey (part analysis: master craftsman/technicians). In addition to this, the project is participating in a Franco-German cooperation venture to compare the skills and duty structures of medium level managerial and skilled technical personnel in Germany and France. Another project, being carried out by the Training Agency in the United Kingdom, consists of a major new piece of research to examine in detail the whole area of employers' manpower policies, their skill needs, recruitment practices and training. The project which is being started this year will explore the nature of employers' use of labour: how definitions of skills are arrived at and how these are put into practice, the problems employers experience and now these are dealt with.

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In France, CEREQ has been carrying out a number of comparative studies involving an international dimension. These include in particular comparative studies on occupations and training in the construction sector (Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, France) which have just been completed.

Some attention is now being directed towards skill and training requirements for environmental protection and consideration is being given to exploring new occupational fields which are of particular relevance to environmental protection. FAS, the Irish State training and employment authority, is carrying out a European orientation programme, the aim of which is to create employment opportunities in export marketing for graduates and to improve the European export capabilities of Irish companies. A follow-up survey of participating companies and graduates has been conducted to investigate labour market experience of the participants and to determine the value of the programmes to the companies.

The state teacher training institute in Copenhagen (SEL) has worked out in collaboration with Roskilde University Centre a modular up-dating training course in foreign language teaching. The purpose of the project is to give participants an insight into the theory and practice within foreign language teaching, with special emphasis on communicative skills and teaching in technical foreign languages. An important part of this project consists in the development of materials and ideas for arrangement of the teaching, which can be tested and developed further within the technical school itself.

The training needs of women working in small and medium-sized family businesses is receiving attention in a research project being carried out by PCBB in the Netherlands. The research looks into the conditions under which women working in (their husbands') businesses undertake training and the kinds of training they need and the development of effective training provisions for them. Another study being carried out by PCBB refers to the development and application of various forms of occupational analysis. This work continues covering such sectors as installation technology, construction, painting and decorating, furniture, catering, civil engineering, tourism and recreation, the food industry, agriculture, horticulture and floriculture. ITE in Greece is planning the first phase of study on incentive measures which lead young people to continue their studies after having cleared the first examination hurdle. The study is to examine

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around 2000 applications received by the ITE in the past year in connection with the placing of university graduates at TEI establishments. The ITE has been commissioned to carry out the study by the Ministry of Education and completion date is scheduled for the end of June this year.

One project being carried out by IEFP in Portugal consists of the provision of training for people starting their own enterprise. The objectives of the project are to provide training in ceramics, horticulture and hothouse flower-growing, including new working methods so that students will be able to create enterprises in these fields with aid from the appropriate state funds. The target population for this project consists of young unemployed persons with inadequate or no training.

4. Future research and development priorities

At the request of the employers' associations, CEREQ has assumed responsibility for one of the first sectoral forecast studies funded by the delegation for vocational training. This contract covers large-scale distribution, predominantly in the food sector. It is to produce forecast scenarios on employment, manpower and skills and above all, recommendations for initial and continuing training. This will be the first attempt on the part of CEREQ to link up economic forecast and qualitative studies in the framework of medium-term forecasting. Another future research and development priority is that of the BIBB on the subject of interactions between information and communication technologies, work organization and training. With their wide range of applications, information and communications technologies will in many ways make decisive changes to most workplaces in the 1990s, and also lead to further rationalization operations and a shift in employment potentials. Gaining an understanding of these interactions is a major challenge to vocational training research, according to the BIBB.

The Training Agency in the United Kingdom is looking at the growing emphasis on the employers' role in training in a major new programme, entitled business growth through training, which has just been launched. It unifies and extends the services which the Agency at present offers companies. Another major new research project related to this initiative, which is to be started this year, is a study of the range of human resource issues facing small and medium-size firms and how these are managed (in particular, how these firms tackle issues of skills supply). The research will build on the three-year project which has just been completed by Warwick University examining the factors that surround human resource development in large companies.

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This section on future research and development priorities has been kept shorter than usual, due to the fact that much of the future R and D work is very closely related to the training and qualification scenario project, details of which are given below in this report.

5. CEDEFOP Training and Qualification Scenario Meeting

Introducing CEDEFOP's first training and qualification scenario meeting, Dr. Piehl extended a special welcome to Ms. Theunissen, President of the CEDEFOP Management Board, to Dr. Haesen, Secretary of State for Federal Affairs in the regional government of Berlin (Senate), and Professor S. Kaczor, Director of the Institute for Vocational Training in Warsaw. Dr. Haesen welcomed the participants to Berlin on behalf of the Senate and the governing mayor, as well as the Senator for European Affairs in the Senate, Frau Heide Pfarr.

Dr. Haesen said that Berlin was well placed to act as a central focus for improved cooperation and liaison between Eastern and Western Europe, and that the Senate was prepared to make constructive and practical contributions to this end. He continued and said that the completion of the Internal Market offered Berlin economic opportunities and said that quality, innovation and flexibility of modern products and services are impossible without the necessary qualified workers. The qualification of employees was of decisive importance for the continued high performance of the Berlin economy. Dr. Haesen then wished the participants a valuable and successful meeting.

In her opening address, Ms. Theunissen stressed the importance of the social dialogue as an essential part of work on future perspectives and said that one of the major problems was that of trying to match training provision to the real needs of the economy.

Other forms of training, apart form traditional forms, had to be considered, for example, training in consumer protection and in protection of the environment. The transferability of training and training qualifications was also a key issue with particular reference to the establishment of the Internal Market, and, in this respect, Ms. Theunissen considered that the traditional boundaries between education and training were becoming less and less apparent.

Mr. A. Trifyllis, Head of the Cabinet of Ms. Papandreou and Mr. A. Kirchberger, also a member of this Cabinet, emphasized the social dimensions of the Internal Market and the development of European unity which, on the basis of the social charter now in

preparation, would ensure social as well as economic cohesion

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and the protection of the rights of working people in all the Member States. Speaking to the theme of the working sessions of the conference - perspectives and scenarios for training and qualification to the year 2000, Mr. R. Faist, former Director of CEDEFOP, articulated the most pressing challenge for vocational education in the immediate future: 25% of people entering the labour market at the time of the establishment of the Internal Market will do so without skill qualifications. Meeting this challenge in the context of the Internal Market will require an unprecedented reliance on vocational training.

Introducing the scenario session, Dr. Piehl said that the aims of the pilot exercise were limited to providing greater transparency with regard to the scenario work being done in various Member States, to attempt a first evaluation of the scenario reports and to consider possibilities for the development of a common methodological framework for future scenario studies.

As was to be expected, the diversity of the various reports caused problems for the evaluation, but this did not prevent the identification of several points of common interest in all the Member States. These reports indicate a general awareness that education and training provision are not keeping up to date with the economic needs of the Member States.

A new feature of the training and qualification scenario pilot project consisted of the carrying out of a number of interviews with government agencies, employer, employee organizations and some independent institutes in six of the Member States to obtain more qualitative information and views on the various national training and qualification scenarios to the years 1992 and 2000. Interviews were carried out in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal. Reports on the results of the interviews, together with some background material on the two sets of three-country interviews, were available at the meeting, together with a composite evaluation and synthesis report on the results of the interviews in the six countries, supported by additional information obtained from documentary studies relevant to the scenario project.

Some of the people interviewed in the six countries mentioned above considered that it was difficult to discern a coherent, long-term strategy for the development of vocational training and education in response to future needs and that many of the training programmes organized in the Member States were designed to utilize money available from Community resources such as the social and regional development funds, without making a real impact on local economic needs.

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Some of the interviewees, particularly in the southern Member States, feared that the opening of the Internal Market would lead to a very serious braindrain of the well-qualified and ambitious people to other Member States where employment prospects, salaries and living conditions were more attractive. There was already some evidence that such a braindrain of well-qualified and ambitious people was already in progress.

The initial reaction to the project material so far suggests that the following points require further consideration:

1. Illiteracy appears to be a much bigger problem than is generally accepted
2. Urgent action is needed to provide opportunities for qualification for the vast numbers of unqualified people in the Community
3. A major campaign to retrain or upgrade qualifications of older workers in view of the demographic trends needs to be undertaken and this will require a major re-think on the part of education and training organizations
4. Efforts should be made to extend the development of modular training systems assuring easy access to those wishing to obtain a first or further qualification without sacrificing standards
5. Increased attention should be paid to the development of methodologies for the evaluation of training programmes in order to make training investment more effective.

Presenting some proposals for further action on the scenario project, W. McDerment, CEDEFOP Project Coordinator responsible for the scenario project, suggested that the work should be more narrowly focussed in future, concentrating on one or two sectors which had good, long-term employment prospects and using the methodologies for the study of these two sectors as a model to be tested and possibly extended to other sectors if the methodologies proved successful. This was agreed by all participants. Dr. Piehl then thanked Professor Amin Rajan and Professor Eduardo Grilo, who had carried out the evaluations of the national reports and conducted the interviews in the six countries mentioned, for their contribution and their presentations at the meeting.

During a session on training for technological change in East and West Europe, Dr. Stanislaw Kaczor, Director of the Institute for Vocational Training in Warsaw, said that Poland was ready for an exchange of information and experience from all over the world, in particular with regard to scientific and technical advancement applied to Poland's specific conditions. He stressed the fact that there was an urgent need for a modernization of the vocational training system, which would concentrate mainly on the development of vocational school

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teachers. Vocational school teachers would be challenged to abandon present ways of training and to try out new methods. He went on to say that a further vocational training policy discussion taking place in Poland at the moment concerned itself with the definitions of workers' qualifications in relation to the concept of training. The need to modernize and improve the vocational training system was urgent and was a subject that was receiving great attention.

6. Discussions, conclusions and suggestions for future action

The scenario presentations gave rise to wide-ranging discussion during which the occupational classification and qualification levels were brought into question since it was felt that the occupational classifications of the past and of today were no longer appropriate since jobs and their contents were changing so rapidly. On the one hand, it was said, we are trying to encourage greater polyvalence and flexibility in training and qualification programmes to aid work-worker mobility and on the other hand, we were spending considerable effort in trying to push people into well-defined compartments with regard to their qualifications. The inconsistency of this policy would prove very costly in the long-run.

The question of providing avenues for qualification for the unqualified also featured strongly in the discussions and it was said that something like 45% of the population in the Community had no qualification of any type. This, allied with a serious problem of illiteracy in some of the Member States, raised a real risk of an increasing and serious polarization of the labour force in the Internal Market in the years to come.

The discussion turned briefly to the question of motivation to take part in education and training programmes and it was reported that a survey carried out in an area in one of the Member States had shown that 45% of the unemployed males surveyed saw no benefit in taking part in training programmes. It was felt very important to find ways of motivating people to take part in training and retraining programmes as an investment in their own future and in the national economy.

So far as the future work on scenarios is concerned, Mr. Dutailly, Director of CEREQ in France said that the main problem was the diversity of the various systems of training in the Member States and that future work should consider, among other things, related economic questions, a danger of polarization and the new training demands arising from an increasingly older population. The quality of training offered and methods of evaluation were also extremely important subjects for future research. Another important item for further consideration was the continuing imbalance between training supply and demand and the problem of certification for mutual recognition.

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Dr. Alex of BIBB said that future scenario work had to take into consideration changes in the employment markets and that it was necessary to obtain comments on the scenarios from education and training organizations. It was, he said, important to remember that the exercise was dealing with national scenarios and not European scenarios and that the role of CEDEFOP was to provide a platform for evaluation and discussion. Commenting on the scenarios at present available to CEDEFOP, he said that some of them had in fact been looking backwards and not to the perspectives expected. CEDEFOP staff commented at this point that only two countries had in fact submitted alternative scenarios.

Mr. Koelink, Vice-President of the CEDEFOP Management Board, said that the scenario exercise could extend its time horizon to the year 2005 since a ten-year lead time in changing education and training provision is not uncommon. He continued and said that it was important that messages from industry were received by the education systems and that these should include employer' forecasts of future competence requirements.

The suggestion was then made that consideration should be given to the establishment of clearing houses in one university in every Member State where studies on future vocational training and qualification requirements could be concentrated.

CEDEFOP staff indicated that there was a great deal of training research material, including scenario material, existing in the Member States, to which CEDEFOP had at present no access. The possibility of establishing a vocational training and scenario databank to access this information would have to be given consideration in the near future.

On the question of the future of the Annual Research Forum and the scenario meeting, it was said by Dr. Schmidt, General Secretary of the BIBB, that the two meetings should be split and held at different times of the year, in order to give more time for in-depth presentations and discussions on the various reports. The Forum meeting could then concentrate on two or three main subjects, with the general research summary reports having been previously circulated. The scenario meeting, which should last two days, could then concentrate on one or two sectors in a pilot project. CEDEFOP staff had already proposed such a split and that future scenario work should concentrate on one or maximum two sectors which had been identified as having good long-term employment prospects. The methodologies adopted for these pilot sectors could then be tested in other sectors subject to their successful application in the pilot stage.

Dr. Piehl, confirmed the wish that the Annual Forum with the research institutions from the 12 EC Member States would remain

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one of the important activities of CEDEFOP with an open discussion among the representatives of the Member States as well as with representatives from the countries outside the Community. This first East-West meeting was, it was felt, an encouraging first step towards an increased cooperation and exchange of experience and information with training development organizations in the two economic groupings.

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